

MILITARY POSTS.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

IN ANSWER TO

A resolution of the House of the 5th December, transmitting a report of inspection of military posts.

JANUARY 3, 1867.—Referred to the Committee on Military Affairs and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington City, January 3, 1867.

SIR: In compliance with a resolution of the House of Representatives of December 5, 1866, I have the honor to send herewith portions of a report of an inspection made by Brevet Brigadier General Babcock, during the past season.

Very respectfully, sir, your obedient servant.

EDWIN M. STANTON,
Secretary of War.

HON. SCHUYLER COLFAX,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

WASHINGTON, D. C., *October 5, 1866.*

GENERAL: In accordance with the letter of instructions from General Grant, April 17, 1866, and verbal instructions of same date, I have the honor to submit the following for the information of the general-in-chief.

I proceeded to St. Louis, Missouri, and reported to Major General Sherman, commanding military division of the Missouri, on the first day of May. Major General Sherman gave me all information, in his opinion, of service to me—copies of instructions to Colonel D. B. Sackett, inspector general, and instructions of Major General Pope. He also showed me the telegraphic correspondence between himself and Brigham Young, president of the Mormon church in Utah, at the same time expressing a wish that I should remain in Salt Lake valley at least four weeks, to fully acquaint myself with the threatening, difficult question between the United States government and the sect of people known as Mormons, suggesting to me the propriety of talking freely and plainly with these people, and particularly the leader, President Young. Leaving St.

Louis May 2, I proceeded *via* Lawrence, Kansas, to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; visiting the fort May 10, met Major General Dodge, United States volunteers, who was then in command of the department of the Platte; also other officers of the post. In conversation with General Dodge, on our way to Atchison, I learned that many of the difficulties of his command arose from the independent position of the officers of the staff departments, particularly the quartermaster department. This I found to be the case throughout my inspection.

FORT LEAVENWORTH.

Fort Leavenworth being the depot of so vast a portion of our country, should be conducted by our most experienced staff officers. At present, and so long as Leavenworth is the depot for so many of the Territories, an officer of experience in the field should, in my opinion, be stationed there. Did not the government own the lands, barracks, and storehouses, I should recommend the early abandoning of the place. So long as the expense of rents exceeds the amount of transportation from Kansas City to Leavenworth, so long it will be an object to retain the post. If the government wish to retain a place on the Missouri river for a reserve depot for men and material, perhaps this will be the best locality. If not, I think the size of the reservation much larger than necessary. I do not believe the government can compete in raising grain with private industry, and think the cultivation of the large farm on this reservation can be economically dispensed with. As the railroad is completed west, of course the point for loading trains will be changed. I believe Major General Ingalls has called this matter to the attention of the Quartermaster General.

FORT KEARNY.

Proceeding by stage from Atchison, I reached Fort Kearny on the 17th of May. Here I met Colonel Carrington, 18th United States infantry, who was then nearly ready to move with two battalions to take up his new position near Fort Reno. Colonel Carrington had formed his party of surveyors, and intends to make a complete survey and report of the country he is to occupy, the roads he is to build, &c.

The transitory state of affairs at Fort Kearny prevented the neat appearance that would otherwise characterize the post. I see no reason why this post should not be dispensed with, and the garrison sent to some point where they will be of service. Perhaps this cannot well be done before next spring.

COTTONWOOD, FORT M'PHERSON.

The next military post is ninety miles from Fort Kearny, at Cottonwood, Fort McPherson, where there was a small garrison. The post was in very fine police appearance generally; very commendable.

JULESBURG, OR FORT SEDGWICK.

Julesburg, or Fort Sedgwick, one hundred and six miles from Cottonwood, is the next military post. This has been one of the most expensive posts in the country, partly on account of its situation, but principally, I think, from fraud of the officers stationed here. For about eighty miles along the Platte there is no wood. I was informed the government had paid as high as \$109 per cord for wood.

At Julesburg the road forks—one branch crossing the South Platte, and following the Lodge Pole creek, coming into the road from Denver, Colorado Territory, to Great Salt Lake City, near Fort Halleck. This shortens the route to Great Salt lake, and affords better grazing and water than the route *via*

Denver. This fork also branches, one branch leading to Fort Laramie. This is the only importance I can see to this location. One company to guard the crossing of the Platte is all that is needed here.

CAMP WARDWELL.

One hundred and two miles from Julesburg, at Camp Wardwell, there is a garrison of two companies.

DENVER.

I reached Denver City, Colorado Territory, May 20. In my opinion, the disposition of the troops along this stage route is very faulty, partly on account of bad selection of posts, and the idea that, to protect a road, the troops must be on the road itself. The distance between these stations is so great that Indians can come upon the road and destroy trains, ranches, stages, and murder the people, and be off before the garrison, eighty or one hundred miles off, can possibly hear of it. It is my opinion that the military posts should be in the Indian country, where the Indian can be watched closely; and if he makes preparations to take the war path, the commanding officer can prevent his moving, or at least destroy his women and children, and drive off his stock. This will be a difficult question so long as the care of the Indian is divided. When the Indian is peaceful the Indian agent is responsible; when he has become exasperated by abuse, and cheated out of his small allowance, the army is responsible. For economy and safety, the Indian department or War Department should be responsible for the behavior of the government's ward during peace and war. Until such is the case, robberies, murders, destruction of trains and ranches, will continue until the superior race has exterminated the other. None of the settlers in these Territories believe in treating with Indians until the Indian has been made to sue for peace. The nature of the Indian, they think, forbids his keeping a treaty made otherwise, any longer than it is profitable to him. When this ceases he can see no reason why he should yield his claimed rights to the white man. A feeling of fear must be created before a treaty can be maintained. The people of the Territories all say that no treaty has ever been kept to the letter by the Indian agents. Having no authority to inspect or investigate, of course I was compelled to form my opinion on unofficial information. A camp on the Republican, said to be a well-timbered and watered country, would place the watch of the Indian in his own country, and must certainly be very much more economical than the present posts at Julesburg and Cottonwood. Summers, when the Indians go hunting and fishing, a careful patrolling of the line of travel would fully protect pilgrims (emigrants) and travellers. The orders of General Pope requiring organization of trains and arming of teamsters was highly approved by most of the settlers and other people of the Territories. The orders were not all complied with. Allowing of pilgrims, (emigrants,) freighters, and travellers to go across this country and encamp without order, is to invite attacks from Indians, or from white men under disguise of Indians.

At this time there was at Denver a quartermaster and commissary stationed, with one company of troops, the 5th United States volunteers. The quartermaster was selling and distributing the large quantity of stores that had been accumulated at this place. He had a number of buildings rented, but was distributing the stores as fast as the number of trains would allow, and restoring the rented buildings. I saw a large number of mules for sale. They had been sent from Julesburg. They bore the plainest evidence of most culpable neglect and starvation of any class of animals I ever saw even in East Tennessee in the winter of 1863-'64. I think the quartermaster's papers for the post of Julesburg will show supply of forage for its animals, and at most exorbitant prices. Had the animals been sent to the valleys to graze they would have been much

better off. Major Robinson, commissary of subsistence, had distributed his stores, and reported in readiness to close the commissary department.

The people of Denver are very anxious that a military post be established there, and find many reasons for it. In my opinion, there is no more necessity for troops there than in any other city along the frontier. There are people enough in Denver and vicinity to protect themselves against the wandering parties of Indians. There were numerous rumors and reports of Indian outbreaks, &c. My own investigation could trace them to nothing more than some cases of stealing by bad Indians. There are many people in these Territories who wish Indian wars. One man said so in my presence, for he said "money was never so plenty as when there was an Indian war." This is, in my opinion, the key to the numerous demands for troops. These men are not the good citizens of the new country, but wandering adventurers.

Denver, as a central point and the largest and most promising town along the eastern slope of the Rocky mountains, makes it a place where supplies such as are grown in the Territory can be advantageously purchased; but all this can be done by agents as well as by an officer stationed there.

At Denver I found also a large lot of ordnance and ordnance stores. The articles were well stored. Some of the arms and accoutrements were in good condition, but many are of no value except as old iron. Among the arms are a large number of "citizens' rifles," bought by direction of the governor of the Territory at the commencement of the rebellion, to take them out of the hands of suspected dangerous persons, and to arm loyal citizens.

The ordnance officer there also received a telegram from the ordnance officer with General Pope, directing him to have his buildings, &c., ready for inspection by such a date, (some three weeks,) thus, in my opinion, defeating the object of such inspection.

At Denver I found many people who wished a military post established in the Middle Park of the Rocky mountains, on the new road from Denver to Salt Lake valley. This road was surveyed and partly built under the protection of and by the United States troops, in the summer and fall of 1865. The troops under Lieutenant Colonel Johns, first California infantry, left Salt Lake valley in early summer, and built the road as far as the foot of the Rocky mountains, on the western side, where the cold weather and fear from deep snows compelled them to deviate from their course through Berthoud pass, and go through Boulder pass. The people also wish the government to build, or assist with troops to build the road through the mountains. To examine both of these points the quartermaster furnished me with animals, and accompanied me. We found the snow so deep that our animals could not go through Berthoud pass, or the next pass above, Vasquez pass. Leaving our animals, taking food and blankets on our backs, we made the march, going down into the Park to near Gore's pass, through the western ridge of the Rocky mountains.

This Park contains a large area of fine grazing land. Two ranches have been established. The owners put in crops of rye, oats, potatoes, &c., all of which looked very promising. The elevation of this Park is so great that the summer season is very short, though the winters are not very cold. The tribes of the Ute Indians come into this Park for summer hunting and fishing, and also to receive the presents from the government. Horses and mules that had run out without being fed (all winter) were in very fine condition. There is no reason, in my opinion, for a military post here, but I think the government should aid in building the small portion of the road ment—the portion leading through Berthoud pass. This road completed, would make the distance between Denver and Salt Lake valley at least one hundred and twenty miles shorter than it now is. It will pass all the way through a fine grazing country well wooded and watered; no alkali bottoms so common as on the present route through the Bitter Creek country, a route over which trains cannot pass some seasons, there

is so little grass and such bad water. This road will be completed, and I think will be the main stage road as the two ends of the Pacific railroad approach completion. It will pass through the Uintah, Green, and Bear River countries, the home of the Ute Indians, where also discoveries of gold have been made. This will necessitate the establishment of at least one military post, which I think should be near the Green river, a country said to be very fine for grain and grass. If this post is established in advance of the travel, I think it will prevent trouble with the Indians by compelling white men to mind their own business. I shall refer to this same post when reporting affairs in Utah. The principal obstacle to overcome in maintaining the road will be the snow through Berthoud pass, which on the 4th of June was on either side of the pass ten feet deep, though it does not lie in drifts. I think daily travel over it would keep it good with as little difficulty as in New England.

On returning to Denver I found a number of rumors of Indian troubles. The Utes were bad in southern Colorado, and other tribes near the Big Laramie. The newspapers were all circulating these reports. I made diligent search and could find no reliable authority for the report. The most reliable report was of warlike threats in the vicinity of Fort Halleck and Big Laramie.

CAMP COLLINS.

On reaching Camp Collins, on the Cache La Poudre creek, sixty-five miles from Denver, I found the commanding officer had sent a party of soldiers to ascertain about the "threatened Indian outbreak." The officer sent found a party of twenty-five Indians on the war-path against another tribe; passed by Big Laramie; failing to get whiskey from a ranchero, threatened to kill him, but did not get the whiskey, and went on their way peaceably. In like manner all Indian troubles vanished as I approached the spot. Speculators and men wishing to necessitate the presence of troops are greater enemies and need more watching than the Indians. The presence in this country of responsible officers will put an end to these false rumors.

Camp Collins is a fine reservation, located where hay, grain, and feed are cheap. The valley is now well settled and fruitful. The necessity of this post after this year is very questionable. For winter station it would be fine, but a better disposition can, in my opinion, be made. I found the post in command of Colonel Fitzsimmons, twenty-first New York cavalry, with four companies of troops. The command was much dissatisfied that it was not mustered out. But about one-half of the command had carbines; the rest were armed with sabres, not a very efficient arm against Indians. Colonel F. informed me that the ordnance officer at Denver refused to issue arms to volunteers. The threatened difficulties made it possible the command might be required. I therefore directed Colonel F. to arm his command at once, and ordered the ordnance officer to issue them, notifying General Pope. This post is the storehouse for the year's supply of rations and stores for the new post at Big Laramie.

BIG LARAMIE AND NORTH PLATTE.

When in Denver the quartermaster showed me the plans of the proposed military post on the Big Laramie plain; also the plat of reservation and wood lot. Major General Sherman had spoken of this, and thought it a fine selection. I reached Big Laramie plains, (the stage station a little way from the reservation.) A glance convinced me it was no place for such a post as we wish to establish. My attention was called to a locality on the North Platte by Mr. Spotswood, one of the employés of the old mail line, who has been in the country a number of winters. He is perfectly disinterested, I believe. I was much disappointed with the spot Big Laramie, and resolved to go on and make an examination of the North Platte crossing, before making a report.

FORT HALLECK.

I passed Fort Halleck in the night. As the post is to be changed, I did not suppose it necessary to make an inspection.

“STAGE STATION, NORTH PLATTE, D. T.,

“June 12, 1866.

“GENERAL: I have made a personal examination of the reservation for a post at Big Laramie, and am not at all pleased with it. It will be easy to supply hay and water, but will be bleak and very cold winters—no protection for stock at all, and no wood within ten or twelve miles, and then on the mountain side of difficult access. The stage people now pay \$12 a cord for wood for the post. When this is established as a post it will leave a distance of 335 miles between Fort Bridger and Big Laramie, the worst Indian country, entirely unoccupied, and lying along the only travelled route to Salt lake. I have examined the old Cherokee trail at its crossing of the North Platte, twenty-five miles west of Fort Halleck. This you will see divides the distance more equally. The point has plenty of wood for fire for years on the banks of the North Platte. Plenty of most excellent grazing about the point. I saw stock to-day that had wintered in here without a particle of feed except what they picked, and they (horses and mules) are in splendid condition. The stock of the post can find excellent protection under the bluffs near the river, also near the buildings of the post. Plenty of hay about the post, and fine meadows within eight and ten miles. Excellent building-stone, sandstone, (needing only to be split,) within one mile of the proposed building place. Pine and cedar timber suitable for building within eight miles.

“In 1862 troops passed the winter in the vicinity in tents, and the officer commanding them informs me they were much more comfortable than those at Fort Halleck. The buildings at Fort Halleck can be moved here, and be used for the coming winter if the troops do not have time to build their quarters.

“The passes of the Platte and its branches are the principal passes in the Rocky mountains through which the Indians go, either to fight each other, or to steal from the whites. At Laramie (Big) the garrison would know nothing of the Indians' whereabouts until they had driven off all the stock along the road, not mentioning the killing of the people. I am of the opinion you will agree with me in this, and have the garrison and stores ordered to Big Laramie, sent to North Platte. I think a party of twenty-five men should be kept at Big Laramie in camp this summer, and the line of this road should be patrolled at least once a week to intimidate the Indians if they come to make trouble. As soon as the cold weather sets in the Indians have to go to their villages, and where they can feed their stock. As soon as this occurs, the detachment out patrolling can all come into winter quarters, and remain until the grass grows in the spring. I have written or sent a telegram to General Grant on this subject. I am certain that if the post is established at Big Laramie, another will have to be put in this country.

“I am, general, very sincerely, your obedient servant,

“O. E. BABCOCK,

“Brevet Colonel and Aide-de-Camp.

“Major General J. A. RAWLINGS,

“Chief of Staff, Washington, D. C.”

I am now informed the post has or will be built at Big Laramie; that Major General Pope does not agree with me about the two places. I have only to say I cannot see how General Pope forms his opinion, as he has never seen either place, and has no report of Big Laramie alone, except my own. The post will be but little superior with respect to bleak winds to Fort Halleck, and much less advantageous for fuel. I do not think the post will remain there one year without reports against the position. This injudicious selection of posts is what

entails the army with such exorbitant expenses at frontier stations. Fort Halleck, where it snows each month of the year, was selected, I am told, by a party who found it a cool pleasant camping place in July.

I reported to General Sherman my opinion of Big Laramie and North Platte, suggesting the change, and telegraphed to General Grant same day.

FORT BRIDGER.

June 17, I passed this post and found it in a shameful condition—grounds not policed, buildings out of order, flooring burned up, bridges burned, shade trees broken down. Major N. Baldwin, first Nevada cavalry, in command. When his attention was called to the post, he said he had no men to do this work. He had between three and four hundred men, with no duty but to care for the post. As the regular garrison for the post would reach there in a few days, I gave no orders. This reservation is twenty-five miles square, thus embracing all the good land within twelve miles in either direction. The hay land is leased to Judge Carter, the post sutler; also the wood land, I think. The result is, no settlers near enough to the post to make it a market, and no one to compete with Judge Carter for hay or wood. I think it would be advantageous and economical to the government to sell the larger part of this reservation. The grounds would be settled, and a competition for supplying produce for the post would result. As it is now the government monopolizes the ground, and gives the sutler the advantage of the monopoly. I think two companies during summer are all that are needed at this post. Winter quarters for four companies can be provided very well. I would not recommend the building of this post with stone, as suggested, for the completion of the Pacific railroad will develop new lines of travel, and bring a settlement along its route that will afford its own protection, while the new line of travel may not lead by this place.

MORMONS.

Major General Sherman showed me, when in St. Louis, the correspondence between himself and Brigham Young, the president of the Mormon church. He informed me that it was possible the government might be compelled to force these people to obey the laws of the land. He wished me to remain in the valley of Great Salt Lake at least four weeks, to talk freely and often with Mormons and Gentiles—thus, if possible, to collect such information as would suggest a policy toward these people. I reached Great Salt Lake City June 19, and remained until the 20th of July. I met many of the Mormon people, as well as the Gentiles, and was treated with civility by both. Perhaps a detailed account of these people will be of interest. The sect known as Mormons is well known in the United States. The marked peculiarity of their religion is the claim of a religious right to have a plurality of wives. In other respects their religion does not offend public opinion. The present head of the church is Brigham Young, whom the Mormons believe inspired at times, through whom God reveals his wishes. He is acknowledged the head of the church and styled president, and is the "Trustee in trust of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints." With this man at their head these people reached this valley July 24, 1847 (?) This valley was then an entire wilderness, with but few acres of ground on which crops could be raised. He located his people in the valleys of the streams running from the mountains, making the main settlement and head of the church at what they called Great Salt Lake City. He turned their attention to cultivating the ground, and found by irrigating those valleys covered with sage bushes, fine crops could be raised. This required a great amount of labor, but this they furnished, and in various portions of the Territory large settlements grew up. The Territory of Utah has now, the Mormons claim, a population of near 150,000 (?) They are settled in various

parts of the Territory, wherever advantages are offered in soil and for irrigation. The attention of the people is generally confined to agriculture, raising of stock, and necessities of life. The cultivation of this country was necessary to the development of the gold mines in Idaho and Montana, for this new country was supplied with flour by the Mormons. The Territory has much mineral wealth, gold, silver, lead, iron, coal, &c., but Brigham Young has kept their attention to cultivation of the soil. I saw a less number of idle people in Utah Territory than in any locality I ever visited. I saw President Young often. At first he was quite dignified and formal, but afterwards talked freely on the various subjects of difference between his church and the general government. The act of Congress of 1863, prohibiting polygamy, has never been enforced. President Young told me he wanted it brought before the courts, and would place no obstacle in its way, and in fact would help to bring it before the courts. He said he believed it was unconstitutional, as it is against one of the foundations of their religion. He went further and said "the Mormons would never have had more than one wife had not God revealed it to them that it was his wish." His sincerity in such statement might be questionable, though his manner and conversation would not seem so. That the people generally believe this I think there is no question. The attempt to enforce this law of 1863 has been a failure, and I think will be, not because the people oppose the courts, but the fanatical views of the people render such failures almost certain. The law makes it a crime to take more than one wife. Before the offender can be tried he must be indicted before a jury of the land. The jury of necessity is entirely or mostly of Mormons. No Mormon can see a crime in taking two or more wives in accordance with God's revelation to them. The result is, no one is indicted. It being a criminal offence, there is no appeal from this, hence the case never comes before the United States courts.

Judge Titus, I believe a very upright man, of no prejudice in favor of the Mormons, informed me that but about one-tenth of the Mormons are polygamists; that he knows of cases where Mormons have been prevented from taking more wives by the law of 1863; and others on account of that law have separated from all but one of their wives. A great number of the inhabitants of the Territory are not citizens of the United States. Whenever they have become naturalized before Judge Titus, he has required obedience to the law of 1863. The Gentiles (anti-Mormons) in Utah thought they would have a Gentile settlement in the Territory, in the Parhanagat mining country, where a Gentile jury could be found, but the last Congress cut this portion of Utah off and annexed it to Nevada Territory. So the Mormons are even stronger than before. The legislature of Utah has placed many matters in the hands of inferior courts, which should be before the highest courts of the Territories; murder and divorce are thus placed. Their militia, instead of being under the control of the governor, is under the authority of the church, or Brigham Young.

In earlier days, when these people were more isolated, that some of them perhaps, to the knowledge of the church, committed very grave crimes, I have no doubt—among the worst, the Meadow Mountain massacre of 1858. I think our government, in justification of its laws and the opinion of its people, should investigate these, and place the stigma where it belongs. During the rebellion I have no doubt but these people had but little sympathy with the government, which they look upon as their persecutor. Also many Gentiles found their way to the Territories who did not wish to aid in putting down the rebellion, but sympathized with the secessionists. These people, the Mormons, were never called upon for a quota of troops. Had they been, I believe it would have been filled with as much promptness as any call that was made. Whenever called upon to aid in suppressing the Indians, they have responded promptly, and I believe have rendered very efficient service. Brigham Young has three hundred men this season protecting the settlers of the southern portion of the

Territory from a band of bad Indians, under a chief by the name of Black Hawk. These men are furnished without complaint. They receive no compensation from the United States. If the other Territories would exhibit similar dispositions, many of the Indian troubles would disappear. That these people were exasperated by the conduct of General Connor, and many officers in his command, there is no doubt. A more quiet or peaceable community I never passed four weeks with. My opinion is that a policy by which the institution they cling to with fanatical faith shall be brought against public opinion, will be one that will soon cure the evil and save our country all the elements of good citizens they possess; while a coercive policy will, in accordance with the history of the world, increase the fanaticism, and destroy all the industry and wealth of 150,000 people and return that now fruitful valley to a desert again. A careful selection of civil and military officers, who with their families will give these ignorant people an example, with the enlightenment by the completion of railroad and telegraph lines, will do more to correct the error of these people than all the crusades possible. This discussion is given to afford you an idea of the people with whom we are to treat in this Territory.

UTAH.

Utah has but three military posts, Fort Bridger, Camp Douglas and Fort Union. The first I have mentioned. The second is located about three miles from Salt Lake City on a well selected reservation made, I believe, by Brigadier General Connor. I found the camp in neat condition, with a garrison of some three hundred and fifty men. As they were expecting to be mustered out, they had no drills, and parades but twice a week.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY.

Great Salt Lake City, from its central locality in the heart of the great mountain district, with a line of telegraph east to the Atlantic and west to the Pacific; also one running north and south through the Territory; its lines of stages to the Missouri river and the Pacific; to Idaho and Columbia river; to Montana and Parhanagat mines, makes it the great half-way place across the continent, and so long as the government holds internal military positions, this will be one of the greatest importance. I most earnestly recommend a department be created making this the headquarters. Send a judicious commanding officer, with zealous quartermaster and commissary. This disposition will be such as will be economical; will place the Mormon question under his eye; will place him in a position to purchase most supplies very economically, and will place him where he can best watch the Indians.

CAMP DOUGLAS.

I think the post at Camp Douglas should be built of stone, (the quarters and storehouses.) A very easily worked sandstone can be found on the reservation, or within a few miles of the post. As wood is very expensive and growing more so, stone buildings will save much fuel. This post should be built to accommodate a regiment, though, summers, a garrison sufficient to take care of the post is all that is necessary. The troops can be used against the hostile Indians in any direction during the summer. A concentration of the troops, winters, will have many advantages; it will be much more economical; it will bring men enough together to enable the command to be disciplined and drilled—a thing impossible where but one, and at the most two, company officers are present. The Indians have to go to certain localities for fish and for game, and are equally compelled to go to certain valleys to winter their ponies and to shelter their women and children. If the troops are used patrolling the lines of travel, moving from place to place, from the time grass is high enough to feed

the ponies until the Indians go to their winter homes, I believe the road can be kept perfectly safe. Four (4) companies at Great Salt lake, four (4) companies at Bridger, and six (6) companies at a post on the North Platte, will protect the road from Denver to Great Salt lake, if properly employed. A similar but more changeable disposition should be made between the terminus of the railroad and Denver. This will change as the railroad advances. A post of at least five companies should be established in the vicinity of Green river to protect the settlements in southern Utah, and people going to Parhanagat mines from the Utes. Of this command, all except the permanent garrisons to protect stores and buildings (the latter to be kept a minimum) should be mounted cavalry or mounted infantry. To send infantry after Indians is useless. The mounted command should be in readiness to move on an hour's notice. This movable force can, judiciously handled, protect the stage and emigrant travel—a vital matter along the route of travel and scattered settlements. The commanding officer should be in the country to judge between an Indian outbreak and a thieving party of whites and Indians. Many expensive Indian expeditions can thus be prevented, and the right of the Indian as well as the white man be respected. The Indian pony, or horse raised on the plains, should be used.

July 20, General Ingalls having arrived, we started for Boisé. From this point my inspections were more limited, as I had no map showing good locality of posts, or information from the commander of the military division of the Pacific.

Leaving Great Salt lake the stage road runs north along the valley of the Great Salt lake to Bear river. At the crossing the road forks, and one line of stages go *via* Fort Hall to Virginia and Bannock City, in Montana Territory; the other, bearing northwest towards the valley of the Snake river, crosses it between the Shoshone, or Great American Falls, and the Salmon Falls. Along through Utah and into Idaho the settlements are quite numerous and very thrifty. The practice of irrigation seems to reclaim all of the lands it can be applied to. The settlers are mostly Mormons, and exhibit the same thrift, industry, and enterprise exhibited in other parts of Utah. The neat adobe houses, handsome stock of horses, sheep, and cattle, with beautiful fields of wheat, oats, rye, and gardens filled with vegetables, with the almost universal planting of fruit-trees, apples, pears, peaches, plums, and apricots, commend these people to the kind consideration of the general government. This country can be and may, some future day, be the great pastures for the sheep and cattle to supply cheaply the vast markets of our country. The grass grows thrifty but ripens early, though when not rained upon the ripe grass affords sufficient nourishment to fatten horses, cattle, and sheep. Vast fields of wild rye afford sufficient hay to cure for the feeding of stock. The completion of the railroad and the settling up of these valleys will reduce the price of food and labor so that many of the fine mines now unworked on account of high prices will produce larger quantities of gold and silver than the famous gulches that are dug over and cleaned in one or two seasons.

As you approach the valley of the Snake river, the country becomes more barren, much of the country being covered with stone of volcanic formation, and a sparse growth of sage bushes. The Indians through this country have ceased to trouble—few scattered people now and then. The establishing of the stage stations from ten to twenty miles, depending upon water, has given a safe road over what a few years ago was very dangerous; these stations having from two to six well-armed men. Their houses, built of logs, stone and adobe, with dirt roof, afford them a safe retreat and a miniature fort, where they can keep a large number of Indians at bay. The Indian, if unsuccessful in his first dash at a station, usually leaves. I saw even solitary men, with one ox team, passing over this route. These stations afford them a safe place to put up for the night. The establishment and maintenance of these great overland

stage lines, such as "Holliday Overland Mail and Express," and "Overland Mail Company," should be aided by the government, not only to secure the carrying of the mails, but to encourage the emigrant to settle in this country. After passing the valley of the Snake river, rich, fertile valleys, with fine ranches, grow more numerous. The Boisé valley is a rich one, and well settled.

PORT BOISÉ.

I reached Fort Boisé July 24, which is situated at or near Boisé City, a thriving little town, capital of Idaho Territory. Though the post, except as a depot, is of but little use now, it has been of good service, for had it not been established, this rich valley would not have been settled. The post is built of stone—more expensive than need have been; though the difference between wood and stone here is not as great as one would at first expect. The hostile Indians in this vicinity have been subdued. A portion of them are on a reservation near the city. They are a poor, miserable set of beings, commanding the sympathy of all.

Governor Ballard, governor of the Territory, says the people of the Territory wish the general government to give them the buildings for their capital. I think this a much better disposition than a sale at so low price as would be paid. This will aid the young Territory to develop its great mineral resources and cost the government but a trifle.

The country from Boisé to Walla-Walla, or to Walula, on the Columbia river, is a settled country, rich in its agricultural and mineral resources. It is settled by a thriving, prosperous set of people, a class that has grown up and become rich and strong, notwithstanding the numerous Indian troubles. Several of the valleys are very rich and beautiful; Powder river, the Grand Round, and Walla-Walla valleys among the finest. No place along this route do you pass many miles without passing houses and well-cultivated fields.

WALLA-WALLA.

We reached this post July 31, and found but six men under the quartermaster, who is also commissary of subsistence and ordnance officer. The necessity for this post, on account of Indians, has passed away. This rich valley is too well settled, but there are advantages in keeping it, I think, as a depot, repair post, &c. Situated as it is, horses, cattle and stock of all kinds can be easily recruited and wintered here. If sold the government will realize but small amount, for the ground cannot be sold without power of Congress, and the buildings without the land are of but little value. It forms a resting and recruiting place for the trains from the distant posts. If this is disposed of the quartermaster will have to rent another place near, either at Walla-Walla or Umatilla.

CAMP LAPWAL, IDAHO TERRITORY,

on the Snake river, was abandoned by order of the department commander, there being no troops to send there. The property, hay, grain, and wood, was sold at a great sacrifice. This post will, without doubt, have to be re-established, as the Nez Percés, Cœur d'Alene, and other Indians are too numerous to be left unwatched.

DALLES.

This post is useless and ordered by the commanding officer military division of the Pacific, to be sold. I think the government would get much more for the property if the sale of the land went with the buildings. The Secretary of War might authorize the leasing of the ground so long as it is held as a reservation. This would apply advantageously to all abandoned posts.

FORT VANCOUVER.

We reached Fort Vancouver August 2, where we found Major General Steele, commanding department of Columbia. This post is now valuable only as a depot for stores, repair shops, ordnance depot, and general rendezvous for troops, or a school of practice. The post is guarded by a single company. General Steele has made one trip through his command, and was on the eve of another to the Owyhee country, where the hostile Indians are. These Indians will have to be punished before they will allow the stage lines and mining people to go through their country.

I think Vancouver should not be abandoned nor be allowed to run down.

Thus we passed from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean without any annoyance from hostile Indians. No night need I have slept out of doors had I not preferred to do so.

The question of supplies for troops is much simplified when we see private enterprise establish a post and keep from ten to twenty animals, with from four to ten men, every ten to twenty miles all the way from the Missouri river to the Columbia river. The same personal attention and economical application on the part of officers would not only simplify the problem, but would secure the supplies at a very much less expense. As the matter of transportation over this route was especially looked into by General Ingalls, I will not discuss it.

PUGET SOUND.

In accordance with the request of the Chief Engineer, General Delafield, I made an examination of a number of points on Puget sound for reservations for fortifications. I examined but from the water. As the country is thickly grown with trees, no judgment could be formed of the size of reservation or the nature of the work. The accompanying small map will show the Chief Engineer where reservations should be made at once and works commenced. Many other points may, upon survey, be necessary; but they are all secondary to those marked with black ink. The mouth of the channel leading into Hood's canal may also be of great importance. A careful topographical survey of the land, and coast survey of the sound, should be made as soon as circumstances will admit. The existence of large coal beds, valuable timber fields and settlements, makes these works necessary.

SAN JUAN.

We visited the post of San Juan, where there is one company of artillery doing infantry duty. This is occupied by troops simply to maintain the claim of the title, and not to protect settlers or watch Indians.

PORT TOWNSEND.

This post has been abandoned; the sale of the property proposed by General Halleck. I think the material at the post will be of more value at the point near by, proposed for fortifications, than the government will realize from sale, especially without title to the land. This post is situated near Port Townsend, the largest town in Washington Territory.

FORT STEILACOOM.

This post has a garrison of one company, and is really the only garrison in this Territory, while the northwestern part of the Territory is said to contain from thirteen to fifteen thousand Indians. I saw some prisoners; they are the finest looking Indians I have ever seen. I think more troops should be sent to this Territory. They can be employed on the proposed fortifications when the Indians are at peace.

We reached San Francisco August 15, where we met Major Generals Halleck and McDowell, who called my attention to a number of subjects, believing the action of the general-in-chief necessary.

TRANSPORTATION.

The transportation of Indian supplies and agents is a very large expense, and one that is often abused. Instances are known where the quartermaster has transported Indian goods, that on reaching destination turned out to be spades, picks, shovels, and other mining tools. They think the Indian department should pay for their transportation out of the Indian appropriations.

WOOLLEN BLANKETS.

Major General Halleck asked General Ingalls, General Sacket and myself to inspect the blankets sent there for issue to the troops. We did so, and agreed we had never seen such blankets issued in the armies during the rebellion, and that they were not fit to issue to a soldier. Many of them are not fit to issue as horse-covers, being too rotten and too full of coarse hair, dirt, sizing, and other material, such as pieces of carpet, old clothing, &c. Not one shown us that the quartermaster had sent there is fit for issue. The Indians even declined to take them when offered to them. These blankets had been inspected by inspectors and several boards of officers; they have been compared with the blankets issued to troops going to California. Each inspector and board condemned them, yet the Quartermaster General positively orders the issue of them. I do not see by what authority the chief of any bureau can order the major general commanding a military division.

WOOLLEN CLOTHES.

We visited the woollen mills at Oregon City, Oregon, and the Mission Mills at San Francisco. At the latter we were accompanied by Major Generals Halleck and McDowell. We were shown blankets, blue army clothes, and flannels, such as had been manufactured at these mills for the use of troops, and afterwards compared them at the quartermaster's storehouse with similar clothes furnished by the Quartermaster General. The goods are all wool, and fine, and at prices cheaper than the invoiced price of goods sent out there from the east, independent of the expense of transportation. The blankets are superior in quality, weight, color, and texture, to any I have ever seen issued to the army, even in the hospital department. The clothes are also of a superior quality.

The manufacturers informed me they had forwarded samples to the Quartermaster General, who turned them over to an officer stationed in New York, who had them inspected by a citizen inspector, who decided the quality was not up to the standard. I would recommend that a board of officers who have had experience in the field be detailed, and the Quartermaster General directed to send these samples before the board for an inspection and report. I think economy in money to the government, justice and comfort to the soldier, as well as justice and encouragement to the enterprise of the people settling up these new States and Territories, would make it obligatory upon all officers purchasing for the use of the government to advertise in these States and Territories, where they are needed, and if the goods can be furnished of equal quality, at same price as in eastern markets, they should be purchased there.

The attention of Congress has been called to this at its last session.

It is economy to the government, and health and comfort to the soldier, that each article sent so often on pack-mules be of the best quality. All the manufacturers claim is an equal opportunity to compete with other manufacturers, which should, without doubt, be given them.

ITEMS.

If the quartermaster at posts where hay is very expensive would purchase their hay baled, it would be advantageous.

SUGAR,

for transportation across the plains and to different posts, should be put in casks or boxes. In sacks it gets damp, and a large percentage is wasted.

TELEGRAPHING.

The expense of telegraphing from each recruiting station to Washington each week the amount of funds on hand is very expensive, and might be much simplified by requiring that these reports be made to chiefs of recruiting departments, and they report to the Adjutant General any discrepancy. Each despatch from west of the Rocky Mountains costs from eight to ten dollars.

COIN.

Paying of employes in California, Oregon, Washington Territory, Arizona, and Nevada in coin, or its equivalent in currency, (greenbacks,) has a bad effect upon both officers and soldiers, for often the clerk gets a much greater salary than the officer, and any hired laborer more than a soldier.

QUARTERMASTER AND COMMISSARY.

At all interior posts where a commissary or quartermaster is stationed, I would recommend he be detailed as commissary of subsistence and ordnance officer. The duties of all three can easily be performed by one man. This will give the line officers to the company and render them always available; not so when they are either acting quartermaster or commissary.

ARMS.

I think all troops guarding the Indian countries should be armed with a repeating arm, without bayonet, and a uniform calibre. The number of different arms now in use renders it almost impossible to keep the ammunition correct. Troops fighting Indians have no use for a bayonet, as they must be mounted, (either cavalry or mounted infantry.) They should have breech-loading arms, at least.

TRANSFER OF SUPPLIES.

Supplies needed at these posts, and not on hand in one department and on hand in another, should be transferred. At Great Salt lake, all the artillery, eleven pieces, stood out-doors without tarpaulin and rotting for want of paint. The ordnance officer had made requisition for both. The requisition for tarpaulin was returned from Leavenworth because "the report of inspectors condemning old ones did not accompany the requisition." The paint would be there some time in the fall. Result: the guns stand out of doors all summer without cover or paint. I found the quartermaster had paint, but could not transfer such stores. This is, without doubt, proper and necessary near large depots, but at distant posts should not be so.

HORSES.

Horses used for troops, in my opinion, should be bought in the country (when possible) that they are to serve in. They are more hardy, acclimated, and cheaper.

I found all through the Territories, where I inspected, a great many animals, horses and mules, with brand "U. S." Many of these animals undoubtedly belong to the United States, while many have been bought honestly, or at least honestly on the part of the purchaser. The animals sold to citizens have seldom been so branded, nor has there been a bill of sale given in each case. They have been sold in large numbers, and if a bill was given at all, it was for the lot, so when farmers purchase of the first buyers, they can see the original bill of sale, and believe their title good. This is particularly the case in Utah. The great number of animals sold at the breaking up of Camp Floyd come under this class. Without doubt, a great many animals were stolen from the government by professional thieves, and a great many were sold to citizens by officers and soldiers, the citizens believing the title perfectly good. The quartermaster at Camp Douglas has taken up many animals. Often being perfectly satisfied that the possessor came by the property honestly, he has allowed him to keep it.

I would recommend an entirely new brand be adopted for all public animals. This will save much trouble, both to the government and to many honest citizens throughout the United States.

I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

O. E. BABCOCK,
Breret Brig. General, A. D. C.

Maj. Gen. J. A. RAWLINS,
Chief of Staff, U. S. A.

Jan. 1870

Gen. Babcock's report
